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## *Lessons from Bosnia*

*Zalmay M. Khalilzad, editor*

***Project AIR FORCE***

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE <b>1993</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-1993 to 00-00-1993</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Lessons from Bosnia</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Rand Corporation,1776 Main Street,PO Box 2138,Santa Monica,CA,90407-2138</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>48</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

The research reported here was sponsored by the United States Air Force under Contract F49620-91-C-0003. Further information may be obtained from the Strategic Planning Division, Directorate of Plans, Hq USAF.

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Published 1993 by RAND

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CF-113-AF

*Prepared for the  
United States Air Force*

***Project AIR FORCE***



## Preface

"Lessons From Bosnia" documents the August 5, 1993 proceedings of the first in a series of RAND seminars entitled, "Lesser Regional Crises/Peace Enforcement." The seminar was held at RAND, Santa Monica, and was sponsored by the Strategy, Doctrine, and Force Structure program within RAND/Project AIR FORCE.

Project AIR FORCE is the federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) operated by RAND for the U.S. Air Force. It is the only Air Force FFRDC charged with policy analysis. Its chief mission is to conduct independent research and analysis of mid-to long-term policy questions of concern to senior leaders relating to national security and Air Force missions, operations, technology, and resource management. The research is carried out in three programs: Strategy, Doctrine, and Force Structure; Force Modernization and Employment; and Resource Management and System Acquisition.

George Donohue is Vice President and Director, Project AIR FORCE. Those interested in further information on Project AIR FORCE should contact his office directly at the RAND address:

RAND  
1700 Main Street  
P.O. Box 2138  
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138



# Contents

Preface .....	iii
Summary .....	vii
Acknowledgments .....	ix
Section	
1. Introduction by Zalmay M. Khalilzad .....	1
2. Turning Points in Bosnia and the West by James B. Steinberg .....	3
3. Turning Points in Bosnia and the Region by Alan F. Fogelquist .....	10
4. Bosnia: Was It Inevitable? by Cheryl Benard .....	18
5. Bosnia As Future by Albert Wohlstetter .....	26





## Summary

Jim Steinberg's "Turning Points in Bosnia and the West," examines whether a different reaction by the United States, the West, or the international community at large at different points in the Bosnia crisis might have produced preferable results. He also assesses what we can learn from this crisis in dealing with future ones.

Alan Fogelquist, in "Turning Points in Bosnia and the Region," describes the various stages in the evolution of the fighting in Bosnia and changes in the strategies of the protagonists. He describes some ominous new scenarios that the crisis may still produce.

Cheryl Benard, who has interviewed some 250 Bosnians in camps in Europe, analyzes the dynamics of ethnic cleansing. In "Bosnia: Was It Inevitable?", she raises questions about the degree of popular support for Serb expansionism, and asks whether current Western policy might be unwittingly encouraging ethnic nationalism.

Albert Wohlstetter, in "Bosnia As Future," outlines a strategy that the United States and the other democracies should follow *now* in dealing with the ongoing conflicts in Bosnia. In doing so, he argues that Bosnia is a test case for likely future conflicts across Europe, making it all the more important that the aggressors in Bosnia be defeated.



## Acknowledgments

The sponsor wishes to express its gratitude to the participating speakers: Cheryl Benard, Research Director at the Boltzmann Institute of Politics in Vienna, Austria; Alan F. Fogelquist, Director of Research at the Institute of South Central European and Balkan Affairs at the University of California at Los Angeles; Jim Steinberg, Senior Policy Analyst, RAND; and Albert Wohlstetter, RAND, whose viewpoints provided a thoughtful and broad-based perspective on the current upheaval in Bosnia and the questions this crisis raises for the United States and the international community.



# 1. Introduction

## by Zalmay M. Khalilzad

The past five years have seen revolutionary changes in the international system. The disintegration of the Soviet Union ended one strategic era and ushered in a new one. During the Cold War, the possibility of global war dominated our military planning. Since the end of the Cold War, our national military strategy has focused on regional challenges. Similarly, planning for U.S. conventional forces has been dominated by the demands for major regional contingencies (MRCs).

Besides major regional challenges, it appears that the United States is likely to face an increased number of Lesser Regional Crises (LRCs) which will pose specialized demands on American forces. In the past, such crises have been treated in planning as lesser included cases: It was assumed that any force able to handle major contingencies would be able to handle LRCs. Whether or not this was justified in the past, there are several reasons why it should be critically reassessed:

- Our future forces will be much smaller, with less built-in capacity for “other” missions, and are unlikely to retain all of the rich combination of capabilities that were affordable in the past.
- LRCs are likely to be more frequent in the future. The lid has come off many simmering conflicts ignored or suppressed during the Cold War. Although the United States will not want to become involved in many LRCs, it is likely to be more than has been the case in the past.
- The handling of LRCs has become more complex as the end of the Cold War and bipolarity has given way to increasing reliance on ad hoc coalitions and adaptations in Cold War alliances such as NATO and the United Nations, involving, and often demanding, new and unfamiliar arrangements. The Clinton Administration has especially emphasized the role of the UN and strengthening its role in dealing with LRCs and peacekeeping has become an important administration priority.

Given these factors, and because of the growing importance of LRCs, all three national security divisions at RAND are planning to conduct significant research in this area during the next fiscal year. Of course, the research will have some

common themes as well as specific features. Project AIR FORCE can make a particularly important contribution to the nation now since, for domestic political reasons (concern over casualties and speed of response), aerospace power could well be the instrument of choice for U.S. involvement in LRCs.

As background to our efforts for next year, we will hold a series of seminars on current LRCs with the aim of identifying lessons which might be useful for the future. The series will be called the "RAND Seminars on Lesser Regional Crises and Peace Enforcement," and will be sponsored by the three national security divisions at RAND.

The first session was on Bosnia. Its purpose was to take a retrospective look at the crisis by people who have favored a different international and U.S. policy than the one pursued so far, and to identify the crossroads at which a different policy might have produced a better result for Bosnia and the region.

## 2. Turning Points in Bosnia and the West by James B. Steinberg

The “Yugoslavia lessons learned” is a rather major cottage industry right now—there’s a lot of conferences, papers, books, etc., that have come out—and most of these fall into the category of mutual recriminations, blame, finger pointing, and, at best, some self-confessional flagellation. The problem that I think we all have, which is a general problem with these kinds of exercises, is trying to develop a legitimate methodology for understanding where we might have done things differently, and why alternative courses might have been preferable. In particular, I think there’s a sort of implicit maxim: things have gone so badly in Yugoslavia that surely there’s something at some point we could have done that would have lead to a different outcome, and a better outcome. I think an appropriate caution is to remind ourselves that as bad as it is, it is conceivable that there are worse outcomes and that we ought to keep that in mind as we go through some of what I view as the decisional points when different strategies were contemplated and choices were made. Having said that, I think as we go through it a case can be made that there are places where better decisions might have been made, and that understanding why we made the ones that we did and didn’t make the ones that we didn’t can help us deal us with crises in the future. And as I go through these turning points I want to focus on three sets of issues which I will come back to at the end but I want to highlight for you to think about as we go through.

First is the question of prevention or early involvement. I think this is an important theme to think about: how can we recognize the direction that a crisis is going; when it is serious enough to warrant our attention, but early enough that we can leverage our impact on the outcome. The second set of issues has to do with the tools of policy. In the course of the Yugoslavia conflict, virtually all the implements of foreign policy, beginning with suasion and diplomatic efforts, through economic measures, and finally to military force and forces became part of the equation. We need to think a little bit about how these tools are used, how they’re used in combination with each other, sequencing, and when. And the third set of issues has to do with the role of outside parties in a conflict, particularly what the role of international institutions ought to be; whether one of neutral brokers that help the parties themselves come to a solution, or whether in conflicts of this sort and in the future international institutions must play a more



interventionary type role. Having flagged those issues, I'm going to try to identify six or seven of what I see are turning points in the conflict. As I said earlier, because I'm quite interested in the question of prevention and early detection, the first two decision points that I want to talk briefly about are developments that took place before there was any significant fighting in Yugoslavia.

The first turning point was around 1987. Obviously, we could take these things back and go earlier to Tito's death and the like. But in this contemporary history that I'm going to talk about, looking at 1987, when Milosevic for all practical purposes seized power in Serbia, this was also the year that Cosic and his colleagues at the Academy of Sciences issued their famous memorandum, written in 1986 and published in 1987, on the concept of a greater Serbia and Serbian nationalism. The reason that I think this was a turning point is that this was really the beginning of the first act of the post-Cold War period, and the first clear indication to the international community of the way in which the Yugoslavia conflict was developing. Nationalism had always been an issue; ethnic conflict had been endemic in various degrees; and the whole structure of Tito's strategy was to find ways to deal with it. But by 1987, it was clear that this was the polarity around which politics in the federation were developing, and was something that was noted by academics and scholars at the time but never became the focus of policy. In particular, there was never any attempt to address the question of how the international community might respond to these rather clear warning signs of rather dangerous forms of nationalism.

The second period, and obviously the dates are slightly arbitrary, is the beginning in 1990, which I would point to as the real crystallization of the problem of where nationalism was going. In Yugoslavia, in early 1990, you had the formal dissolution of the autonomous parliament in Kosovo. You also had, in April of 1990, the elections in Croatia where Tudjman and HDZ won the first generally open election under a very nationalistic platform. You also had the last series of proposals from both Slovenia and some other parties in Croatia to try to convert the Yugoslav Federation to a confederation. The reason I point to this as a turning point is it seems to me that in 1990, the question involved a number of the issues which have since come on to our agenda, including the responsibility of the international community for protecting human rights, the responsibility of the international community for assuring minority rights, and, particularly, constitutional guarantees for minorities—the degree of support the international community would give to the democratic movement and democratic elements in these societies. In 1990, there were signs that began to point to growing tension but didn't rise to the level of direct conflict, although there was an uprising in the

Krajina area in August of 1990. But the kinds of early intervention (prevention) tools, the kinds of things that might have been done that are now talked about in the context of the CSE and elsewhere, really were not brought into play. There are reasons for this—remember what else was going on in 1990—in Kuwait, for example. This highlights for me the fact that these kinds of slow-evolving crises are ones where there are warning flags that we can recognize and yet we need to learn: (1) how to put them higher up on the foreign policy agenda at a earlier stage and; (2) try to learn how you wield the kinds of tools that are effective in dealing with these sorts of crises.

The third turning point is easier to pinpoint: on the 25th of June 1991, when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence and, within a matter of hours, fighting began, primarily in Slovenia. Why is this a turning point? Well, obviously, the point at which the conflict broke out was important because it became clear that the Federal government as such had more or less become simply an extension of Serbia and the Serbian political goals; that the Yugoslav army, the JNA, was largely under the control of Serbian forces and that, therefore, the character of the conflict and the dissolution was not one of the Federation trying to save itself, but rather a fight between the various ethnic elements trying to constitute themselves into states. The second reason it's important is because it marks the bifurcation responsibility for the crisis between the United States and Europe. Up until a few weeks before the fighting began, the United States had played a moderately involved role, seeking to hold the Federation together, motivated by two understandable factors: first the belief that any dissolution, any breakup of Yugoslavia, would lead to bloody conflict and therefore trying to hold it together was a way of trying to avoid this conflagration. It was a worthy objective but one which, looking back from the perspective of today, could not have been achieved through the strategy that the U.S. was pursuing. And second, the United States was concerned about the exemplary effect of the breakup of Yugoslavia, particularly on the Soviet Union.

Throughout the fall of 1990 and the spring of 1991, there was a certain amount of U.S. diplomacy engaged in the effort to try and save the Federation. But following the failure of Secretary Baker's trip to Belgrade the week before the fighting began, the United States quite explicitly signaled that it was now prepared to let the Europeans do what they had always said they wanted to do—which was to handle their own problems. The Europeans, on the rhetorical level, stepped up to the plate. The European Council was meeting in Luxembourg at the time the fighting began; the Troika, representing the EC presidency, was sent to Yugoslavia, and in a fairly self-congratulatory way the Community said that it had come of age and was going to handle this problem. Well, as we all know,

what was briefly hailed as the triumph of Europe by the Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos turned into one of the great embarrassments of the post-Cold War period. This was a turning point for two reasons; first, it raised the question whether it makes sense for the United States to disengage and for Europe to handle conflicts like the former Yugoslavia by itself; and second, it provided a concrete measure of where Europe was in terms of its ability to conduct a concerted foreign policy, to build a consensus and to take decisive measures.

The next turning point was the 25th of September, 1991. There were two significant features about the 25th of September, 1991. The UN imposed an arms embargo on what was still then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, certainly with the acquiescence and perhaps even encouragement of Milosevic. But second, in the original draft of the resolution imposing the embargo, which was ultimately adopted on the 25th of September, France had proposed the establishment of an emergency intervention force to accompany the arms embargo as a means of, in effect, trying to impose a cease-fire or at least seize on one of the intermittent cease-fires. Although there had been some desultory discussion through the summer, France's proposal was one of the first concerted efforts to think about whether military forces ought to be inserted into conflict. The proposal had the support of near-neighbors like Austria, but very few other countries were enthusiastic, and in the negotiations that lead up to the resolution the interventionary force was dropped and the only thing left was the arms embargo. Now, as the U.S. policy debate subsequently made clear, this was an important decision. We all know in retrospect that Milosevic and the JNA were not blind to the advantages of this arms embargo. From their point of view, they had an enormous cache of weapons and the arms embargo was clearly going to have an asymmetrical impact. And yet, as one looks back at the record of why this happened, most of the Western powers didn't much think about this or even try to know much about the situation on the ground. Rather, it was sort of a reflexive reaction: "Oh, they're fighting, let's cut off the weapons, this is a good thing to do, and we can't agree on doing anything else," such as using force, or even significant economic measures (at this point, few sanctions of any significance had been imposed). As we think about what tools to use for conflict management, this is an important turning point.

Through the fall, and I point to early October and early November, another psychologically significant turning point was the way in which the character of the fighting changed, particularly the seizure of Vukovar and later the shelling of Dubrovnik. This aspect of the war was important in my mind for two reasons: (1) in the case of Vukovar, the EC had actually tried to mount a humanitarian

mission to relieve the civilian population. That mission was attacked and the EC backed down. There are different accounts as to which parties were responsible, maybe all of them, but the EC's response reflected a view which continued on throughout the rest of conflict; rather than say, "we mean this," that our objective is to relieve the population in Bukovar, the EC backed off. And similarly, when the Yugoslav Navy began shelling Dubrovnik, there were discussions of European military involvement but the EC nations backed off. All of the signals that were given were quite clear: faced with resistance the international community was prepared to consider a degree of involvement, but only if it meant a low risk of casualties and a low possibility of conflict.

The next turning point is, perhaps, one of the more familiar ones: the decision to recognize the individual republics. The full story is a moderately long one. To summarize briefly, throughout the summer and fall, Germany in particular had been pushing for recognition of Croatia, in particular as a political solution to the crisis. In part in response to German persistence and a context in which Europeans had just signed the Maastricht Treaty and wanted to show that Europe could, rather than go separate ways, go the same way, Germany brought its reluctant partners along. The recognition decision has had a number of consequences, the most important of which was that, in the end, it set off the great tragedy that took place in Bosnia. The decision to recognize raised a number of important policy issues such as under what circumstances do we recognize the breakup of a state, but second, and even more important, what are the further policy consequences of taking this action? In the case of Croatia to some extent, and to an even greater extent in the case of Bosnia, the decision to recognize was not accompanied by a commitment to follow the consequences of recognition that flowed from the UN Charter and international law: to guarantee the integrity and inviolability of the states that were recognized. So the decision to recognize was half-hearted which, in the view of many, and I tend to share it, actually helped to ignite the conflagration in Bosnia without giving any particular help or means of solving it.

At the same time, that is, in January 1992, you have the decision of the UN to deploy the first of the UN forces in Croatia, UNPROFOR I. Again an important turning point because: (1) after an extended period of diffidence on the part of the UN there was a sense that the UN ought to get involved; but even more important, the UN unwillingness to face up to the consequences of the decision to deploy the UN force. The mandate, for one, was quite ambitious by traditional UN terms because it called for disarming the parties in the Serbian-occupied parts of Croatia; it called for the UN to assist in the resettling of refugees, and for the beginning of political dialogue. What in fact happened is that the UN forces

went in, and although they had a political mandate to achieve these goals, the political will to achieve these goals was lacking in the face of resistance, primarily by the Serbs and, to some extent, the Croats. So the UN found itself in the position of having committed itself to achieve an objective but still unwilling to use force or at least pressure to bring it about. UNPROFOR is now caught in the middle of parties, achieving none of its objectives and viewed as a hostile force by both of the contending factions.

The second excursion of the same sort was the decision in August 1992 to send the UNPROFOR Force II force to Bosnia. The genesis of that decision was the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Bosnia in June and July. Once again, the mandate for the UNPROFOR II force was quite significant, a Chapter VII resolution in which "all necessary means" were authorized for the delivery of humanitarian relief. Forces were sent in and, once again, the realities and the political will to enforce the mandate were lacking. Rather than seeing the mission as one of delivering humanitarian relief by all necessary means, the UN, both on the ground and in New York, chose to interpret it as "by all means that the other parties allow us to use." In effect, the UN gave a veto to all the parties on the ground in the delivery of humanitarian aid and so it was rather difficult, and in some cases impossible, to achieve the mission. Moreover, as we've also seen, these forces became hostage against any other kind of intervention that the international community might take—every time more forceful means were advocated, the countries who had forces on the ground expressed concern about the safety of their humanitarian aid troops.

These all fall into the category of turning points where one can imagine other things that might have had a more salutary effect. Acting in the category of "the dog that didn't bark," a decision that may have actually had a positive effect, again, we have a methodological problem because the "bad thing" didn't happen but we don't know whether the policy decision is responsible. That was the decision in December 1992 by President Bush to issue a fairly blunt warning to Milosevic about the consequences of Serbian action in Kosovo and the use of Serbian force to carry out ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. The telegram which, while theoretically a private commitment, was widely circulated and relatively explicit in its terms. Although there continues to be considerable tension in Kosovo, to date we have not seen the kind of high visibility, inflammatory, paramilitary activity in Kosovo similar to the nature in Bosnia that might lead to civil war in Kosovo and potentially cross-border operations. I want to stress that there are many reasons why, even absent this policy decision, Milosevic might have chosen not to move in Kosovo at this time—but nonetheless it's important to see

this at least as one area where there was a significant policy decision which as of today has not lead to a new dimension of tragedy in this conflict.

To sum up then, one of the things that we see in all of these turning points is that the policy instinct to take gradual, escalating measures can be seen throughout the Yugoslavia crisis as one that not only rewards faits accomplis but actually may accelerate them because parties know that if they get done what they want to get done soon, at the early stages when relatively modest policy initiatives are adopted, then they can, in effect, alter the situation on the ground and constrain the international community. And second, there is the question of whether, and at what point, the use of force becomes a relevant consideration. Force traditionally, and certainly in this case, has always been viewed as the last resort. The last resort may finally come to fruition in the final days of the fall of Sarajevo, at the very time when there is little left to save. Finally, there is this question about whether international organizations can and should remain "neutral" parties who have their options constrained by the willingness of the parties to the conflict to go along. On the one hand, there are considerable risks for the international community, or even an individual nation, to become involved in a conflict of the sort that took place in Yugoslavia. At the same time, by insisting on consent and neutrality, the efficacy of almost all the measures that have been adopted and the ability to achieve the stated objectives has not been especially impressive.

### 3. Turning Points in Bosnia and the Region by Alan F. Fogelquist

The nature of the military conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina is poorly understood by the general public and by many of the world's political leaders responsible for making decisions about foreign policy. The aim of this presentation is to present a concise but accurate account of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina with special attention to the military-political dimension of the conflict.

The first stage of the present war in Bosnia-Herzegovina began with a massive Serbian assault on Bosnia on April 6, 1992, and initially concentrated on the northeastern part of Bosnia closest to Serbia and the area around Sarajevo. Simultaneously, there was a massive effort by Serbian forces to capture the city of Sarajevo, which they expected to accomplish within only a few days. This attempt proved a complete failure. During the first month or two of the conflict the Serbs succeeded in establishing military and political control over areas where the Serbian population made up an overwhelming majority. A prime example is the area around Banja Luka in the northwest, where Serbs represented approximately 70 percent of the population, although before the war there was also a fairly strong Muslim minority and small groups of Croats living there. The Serbian forces crossing the Drina River succeeded in establishing control over some mixed Muslim and Serbian regions in eastern Bosnia but were unable to gain control over such primarily Muslim towns as Srebrenica and Gorazde, and an arc of territory mainly inhabited by Muslims around the main area under Muslim and Croatian control. Wherever the Serbian forces were able to seize territory they engaged in systematic campaigns of terror, murder, and expulsion of the non-Serbian inhabitants, known as "ethnic cleansing."

Shortly before and after the war began, Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croatian militias joined together to form the *Hrvatsko vijeće obrane* (HVO), Croatian Defense Council. In the first months of the war the HVO was able to gain control of most of western Herzegovina and a considerable part of central Bosnia. The Bosnian government forces were formed from local police forces, militias, and territorial defense forces loyal to the Bosnian government under the leadership of former Yugoslav army officers from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Included in the leadership of

the Bosnian Armed Forces are Muslims, Croats, and Serbs.<sup>1</sup> The Bosnian Armed Forces established control over the city of Sarajevo and the heights to the southwest of Sarajevo, Mount Igman, and Mount Bjelasnica. Besides Sarajevo, the major centers of Bosnian government, political, and military power are the industrial cities of Zenica, Maglaj, Gradacac, and Tuzla. In these areas Muslims, or a combination of Muslims and Croats, were in the majority. In the months prior to the conflict, local Muslim or Croatian political leaders gained control of the police forces and were able to confiscate some of the weapons of the territorial defense forces, the Yugoslav equivalent of our National Guard. In the case of Tuzla, the multi-ethnic forces loyal to the Bosnian government, including considerable numbers of Croats and Serbs, succeeded in overrunning the arsenals of the Yugoslav Army and capturing significant quantities of weapons. Using captured weapons, within one month they succeeded in driving the Serbian forces to about 20 kilometers beyond the outskirts of Tuzla and establishing control over the strategic Tuzla airport. This airport is the largest in Bosnia except for that at Sarajevo and the one at Banja-Luka, where Serbian forces are basing their air force. The Tuzla airport is capable of landing jumbo jets. It is located at some distance from enemy gun positions and is, therefore, safer than that of Sarajevo. It is at present unused, but with some repairs could be used for military operations in support of the Bosnian armed forces.

The second stage of the war after the initial Serbian assault was the consolidation of defenses of cities and regions under the control of the Bosnian government and indigenous Croatian (Bosnian Catholic) forces who were still effectively allied against the Serbian attackers. The Serbian response was to lay siege to towns or garrisons at the periphery, bombard them mercilessly from a distance, and isolate them from core areas under Bosnian government or Croatian control. Only when the Serbian attackers believed that the besieged strongholds were running out of food and ammunition did they attempt to take them by infantry assaults. In northeastern Bosnia, after a massive and concentrated artillery, rocket, tank, air, and infantry campaign, the Serbian-Yugoslav Army forces succeeded in punching a narrow corridor from Serbia through the northern part of Bosnia to the northwestern region of Bosnia and Serbian-controlled areas of Croatia. This precariously held corridor, which is only about two kilometers wide near Brcko, connects Serbia proper with the main area of Serbian control and military power around Banja Luka and the Serbian controlled areas of Croatia known as the Krajina.

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<sup>1</sup>At the present time about 70 percent of the men in the Bosnian army are of Muslim origin. The rest are of Bosnian Serb (Orthodox), Croat (Catholic), and mixed origin. Stjepan Siber, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bosnian army is a Bosnian Croat. Jovo Divjak, vice-commander of the Sarajevo region, was born in Serbia but is a long time resident of Sarajevo and is loyal to the Bosnian government.



One year after the conflict began, the number of men in each of the armies was approximately 120,000 to 150,000 in the Bosnian government forces; between 70,000 and 90,000 men in the Serbian forces; and some 25,000–30,000 men in the Croatian Defense Council. Because of Serbian control of the officer corps of the Yugoslav Army, the Serbians were able to acquire about 90 percent of the weaponry belonging to the Federal Army of Yugoslavia. Much of the Yugoslav army's weaponry was concentrated in Bosnia in the months before the war. After the war began, the Serbian-"Yugoslav" government delivered considerable additional supplies of weaponry, munitions, and fuel supplies to their forces in Bosnia. The existence of the Serbian-held corridor across northeastern Bosnia permits the shipment of fuel and munitions to this area of Serbian control. If the Bosnian forces were to succeed in closing the narrow space between Serbia and the bulk of Serbian forces in the Banja Luka and Croatian Krajina regions while the United Nations actually enforced the ban on flights by military aircraft over Bosnia imposed on October 9, 1992, the Serbian military effort in both Bosnia and Croatia could be strangled and deprived of munitions and fuel supplies.

The arms embargo placed on all republics of Yugoslavia in September 1991, and maintained against Bosnia after its independence, has made it extremely difficult for the Bosnian government to acquire the kind of weaponry needed to resist the Serbian forces. The Bosnian forces have a limited supply of anti-tank weaponry and medium- to long-range artillery pieces capable of firing back at the Serbian besiegers' positions. The Croatian Defense Council forces have received modest quantities of artillery and anti-aircraft guns from neighboring Croatia. Nevertheless, the military effort against the better armed Serbian forces by both the Bosnian government and Croatian Defense Council has been quite remarkable. Bosnian government forces, through bravery and tactical skill, have destroyed large numbers of Serbian tanks, have defeated concentrated assaults on major population centers, have carried out successful commando operations behind enemy lines, and have succeeded in capturing substantial supplies of weapons and ammunition. As I pointed out earlier, the military strategy of the Serbs has been to overrun weakly defended areas after a period of prolonged bombardment and siege. The main weakness of the Serbian forces has been poor motivation, poor discipline, and a lack of manpower. The Serbian forces are overextended and lack sufficient manpower to carry out concentrated campaigns on more than one front at a time. These overextended forces are vulnerable to commando attacks and guerrilla warfare behind their lines. The Serbian forces have skillfully manipulated United Nations sponsored cease-fires in order to regroup and bring in additional supplies of arms and ammunition. In a number of cases, Serbian forces have ceded conquered positions to United Nations peace-keeping forces on the condition that Bosnian government or Croatian forces be

kept out. The United Nations has thus been placed in the position of protecting Serbian military gains, thus freeing Serbian forces to move elsewhere.

In the summer and early fall of 1992, Bosnian government and Croatian Defense Council forces successfully defended and even extended the areas under their control, despite overwhelming Serbian superiority in weaponry. Had the Croatian government and Croatian Defense Council continued to cooperate with the Bosnian Army against the Serbs it is even conceivable that the Serbian forces could have been defeated without outside assistance.<sup>2</sup> In October 1992, after a massive Serbian campaign, the city of Bosanski Brod fell to the Serbs partly because of a conflict between Croatian and Muslim groups defending the city. Bosanski Brod was very important because of its location at a crossroads essential for transportation of military supplies from Serbia across northern Bosnia to Banja Luka and it had been a major stumbling block and barrier to the Serbs' ability to supply their main areas of control. Once the corridor was open, Serbians were able to send reinforcements from the relatively safe area of Banja Luka to other parts of Bosnia and Hercegovina where their forces were weaker. The fall of Jajce in early November 1992, a few weeks after the fall of Bosanski Brod, marked the beginning of serious conflicts between the Bosnian Army units and those of the Croatian Defense Council in Bosnia.

The main source of the conflict between the Bosnian and Croatian governments pertains to the territorial and administrative organization of the Bosnian state. The Izetbegovic government and its supporters have insisted on maintaining a multi-ethnic and democratic Bosnia without territorial divisions based on religious or ethnic identity. This view is supported not only by President Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action, which is predominantly Muslim, but by most Bosnian Croats, many Bosnian Serbs, and almost all people of mixed national-confessional origin. In contrast, the numerically small but politically and militarily dominant Hercegovinian Croatian faction supported by President Tudjman of Croatia has argued for maximum autonomy for areas of Bosnia-Hercegovina where Catholics or Croats constitute a majority or plurality. Tudjman's ally in Bosnia, Mate Boban, gained control over the major Croatian political party in Bosnia-Hercegovina and its military arm, the Croatian Defense Council, because of direct support from the Croatian government. The Tudjman government provided Boban with military, financial, and propaganda support which enabled him to wrest control of the party from the legally elected leader of the Bosnian-Croats, Stjepan Kljucic, who remained a member of the

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<sup>2</sup>Such was the view of Croatian General Martin Spegelj, an advocate of strong cooperation with the Bosnians. I interviewed General Spegelj at Croatian Army headquarters in Zagreb on September 1, 1992.

presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina until September 1992. Kljucic, like Bosnia's president Alija Izetbegovic, favored a unified multi-ethnic and democratic state.

Mate Boban, a former factory manager and Communist Party political functionary in Herzegovina, emerged as a super-nationalist calling for the creation of an autonomous or independent Croatian entity which could either remain loosely confederated with Bosnia or at some future date be united with Croatia.<sup>3</sup> The ascendancy of Boban's autonomous, or pro-independence, group of Croats in Bosnia can, to a considerable degree, be attributed to the European Community (EC) policy first set forth in January and February 1992, prior to the outbreak of war in Bosnia, by Jose Cutelheiro, the Portuguese diplomat chosen to head the EC negotiations on former Yugoslavia begun in Lisbon and later resumed in Geneva. The EC proposed a plan for the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into three ethnically based "cantons," one Bosnian or Muslim, another Serbian or Orthodox, and a third Croatian or Catholic. It was at the behest of the EC that Mate Boban, an adherent of cantonization became the official negotiator for Bosnia-Herzegovina's Catholics or Croats. This gave legitimacy to Boban, an unelected, self-appointed leader supported by the Croatian president and thus undermined the legitimacy of the Bosnian government. EC policy stimulated ethnic conflict by promoting the cantonization of a country whose ethnic groups were so intermingled that there could be no rational territorial division based on ethnicity or religion without tremendous conflict and upheaval. In January 1992, the United Nations lent its support to the policies suggested by the European Community. In so doing the United Nations' leadership also contributed to the de-legitimization of the multi-national, multi-ethnic democratically elected government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and gave legitimacy to the national populists, or, perhaps more accurately, neo-fascist demagogues like Mate Boban and Radovan Karadzic.

About two months after the outbreak of war in Bosnia, Boban met secretly with Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, at Gratz in Austria, where it is widely believed they discussed the outright annexation of western Herzegovina and central Bosnia to Croatia, and the annexation of northwestern Bosnia, Eastern Herzegovina, and the entire eastern part of Bosnia to Serbia. In any case, the fact that Boban met secretly with Karadzic in April 1992, after the Serbian invasion of Bosnia, had caused the Bosnian government to mistrust Croatian intentions. Over the months, Boban's Croatian Defense Council forces

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<sup>3</sup>With support from the Croatian military, Boban and his supporters gained control of Croatian Defense Council (HVO) forces in Herzegovina and part of southern and central Bosnia. HVO forces in the Bihac enclave in northwest Bosnia, in the northern Bosnian Posavina region, and in the Tuzla area, while separate from the armed forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina, do not support Boban's separatist line and are fighting side by side with government forces against the Serbian aggressors.

have confiscated considerable quantities of weapons and humanitarian supplies destined for the Bosnian government. These actions have badly hampered the Bosnian government's military efforts. In the areas under their control, Boban and his political associates have created a virtual state within a state, which he calls the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna. In Boban's mini-state, Croatian license plates for automobiles, Croatian money, and Croatian postage stamps are used, and the Croatian flag flies on public buildings.

The next development in the Croatian-Bosnian government conflict appears to be a direct consequence of the Vance-Owen plan to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina into ten provinces. According to the proposal set forth in the fall of 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina's three major ethnic or national-confessional groups, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, would each constitute a majority in their provinces. In the tenth province, Sarajevo, no ethnic group would constitute a majority. The way that the territories were allocated represented a deliberate strategy by Vance and Owen to gain Mate Boban's support for the proposal, thus isolating the Bosnian Croats from those loyal to Bosnia's multi-ethnic government. Bosnian Croats, who made up only 17 percent of the prewar population were offered 25 percent of the republic's territory for their three provinces. Only 29 percent of the territory was to be allocated to the Muslims, even though Muslims represented 44 percent of the total prewar population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbs, who comprise only 31 percent of the population were to receive 42 percent of the country's territory. No provision was made for the seven percent of the population of mixed origin which favors a multi-ethnic and united Bosnia.

Boban and other Croatian extremist leaders interpreted the Vance-Owen proposal as an authorization to establish absolute military control and an ethnic dictatorship over the areas which were supposed to be assigned to them under the yet unratified proposal. During the course of the Vance-Owen discussions, a pro-Boban Croatian extremist named Bozo Rajic managed to maneuver himself into the position of defense minister for all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In late January 1993, Rajic ordered the Bosnian Army forces in central Bosnia to place themselves under the command of the completely illegal entity, the so-called Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna. Central Bosnia is an area with a Muslim majority which the Vance-Owen plan had inappropriately assigned to the proposed Croatian dominated provinces.<sup>4</sup> When Bosnian military units refused to comply with his order, Rajic sent Croatian Defense Council troops, supported

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<sup>4</sup>In this region, if one adds loyal Serbs, anti-divisionist Croats, and representatives of mixed marriages, one will find that more than 70 percent of the population is opposed to the ethnic division of Bosnia and is loyal to the Bosnian government, while less than 30 percent are loyal to the Croatian Defense Council.

by forces from Croatia with heavy artillery and some tanks to attack the communities resisting his orders. That was the beginning of the all-out war between the Bosnian government forces and the Croatian Defense Council which still continues with ferocity.

The latest stage in the war began in the spring of this year, with a new Serbian military assault on eastern Bosnia, culminating in the surrender of government forces at Srebrenica under the auspices of the United Nations, the beginning of the United Nations "protected enclave" policy. According to this policy, certain areas were designated as enclaves where humanitarian relief was to be delivered and the civilian population was to be guaranteed safety from Serbian attack by United Nations peace-keeping forces. This policy, originally proposed to the Security Council by members of the movement of non-aligned nations as an emergency measure to save the lives of people in a few specific predominantly Muslim enclaves loyal to the Bosnian government such as Srebrenica, Gorazde, and Zepce in eastern Bosnia, was extended to include most of the other regions under government control. The designation of these areas as protected enclaves has insured neither the arrival of humanitarian supplies nor the safety of the residents from bombardment by surrounding Serbian forces. United Nations peace-keepers have rules of engagement which are so strict that they rarely respond to armed attacks by the aggressor forces. During the Serbian campaign to conquer eastern Bosnia some four divisions of "Yugoslav," or Serbo-Montenegrin, regular army troops entered Bosnia from Serbia. The initial Serbian force of approximately 50,000 had been nearly doubled by spring of this year. During this spring campaign Serbian forces were able to completely overrun the Bosnian government areas in eastern Bosnia after cutting them off from food, fuel, and munitions supplies.

At the end of June 1993, Serbian forces, supported by helicopter gunships in violation of the ban on military air flights over Bosnia, seized control of Mounts Bjelasnica and Igman immediately to the southeast of Sarajevo. When Serbian troops withdrew from these positions under international political pressure, the heights were turned over to UNPROFOR peacekeepers and the Bosnian government forces in Sarajevo were thus effectively cut off from their chief overland supply route for weapons and ammunition. Despite this setback, Serbian forces appear not to have the manpower or the will to conduct a final assault on Sarajevo, where they would face resistance and suffer enormous losses from heavy concentrations of Bosnian government troops. Despite being cut off from the outside world, Sarajevo still has some capacity to manufacture weapons and ammunition. A military campaign to overrun Sarajevo might spark decisive

military action by the United States and NATO to break the Serbian blockade of the city.

It is remarkable that, despite the massive Serbian campaign and a major war taking place between Croatian and Bosnian government forces, the main areas that are controlled by the Bosnian government forces are still essentially intact. The largest and most important industrial cities and economic centers of Bosnia-Herzegovina are still in Bosnian government hands. The towns of Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla, and Konjic, which are under Bosnian government control are able to produce light weapons and even some artillery. Konjic produces large supplies of ammunition for infantry weapons and artillery. The Bosnian industrial towns have produced some artillery, multiple rocket launchers, and they have even built a few tanks for the Bosnian army. Tuzla is the center of a large chemical industry which makes chlorine gas. In the event of a final Serbian assault, the Tuzla town council has voted to release large quantities of chlorine gas creating immense destruction and loss of life over a vast region including most of Serbia and reaching as far as Hungary and Austria. Having met with military leaders from the Tuzla region, I believe one must take the Tuzlan suicide threat seriously.

In conclusion we can say that the Bosnian armed forces performance has been nothing short of remarkable given all of the disadvantages faced by the Bosnian government, especially the arms embargo. If Western policy were to change it would still be possible to assist the Bosnian armed forces to defend Bosnia.

## 4. Bosnia: Was It Inevitable? by Cheryl Benard

The following observations are based on 250 interviews conducted in four camps in Croatia during the winter of 1992-93 and in five camps in Austria between November 1992 and June 1993. The focus of the interviews was sociological, dealing with their experiences in the immediate pre-crisis situation, during flight, and as refugees. However, the interviews revealed a number of politically relevant points. I would like to focus on three of them:

1. Ethnic cleansing, although it appears in sum and in retrospect to have been a very determined, resolutely conducted effort, was in fact a haphazard, vacillating process and could possibly have been ameliorated or even blocked by intervention. Instead, nonintervention gave tacit permission to go on.
2. Public support for Serb expansionism is not unanimous, and there were opportunities to further undermine it.
3. The current theory of a revival of ethnicity might, at least in part, be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### Ethnic Cleansing

In reviewing the conduct of ethnic cleansing, we find a basic disparity depending on our level of analysis. The overall impression is one of ruthless determination, but reports "from the ground" reveal a high level of chaos and uncertainty. To examine this in more detail, let us briefly review ethnic cleansing from the micro level.

The stories of the refugees contain innumerable individual variations of experience, but at the same time, a pattern emerges.

Ethnic cleansing is carried out in three basic ways: The Bosnians are either pressured to leave, or they are forcibly driven out, or they are killed. Which of these methods is chosen appears to depend on three variables:

- the ethnic balance in their particular town;
- their proximity to battle zones, and;

- which faction of the Serbs controls their area.

In explanation: towns where there is a Serb majority are more likely to begin by exercising repression against the Muslim minority, while in predominantly Muslim towns, direct military action against them is more likely. How brutal or how comparatively disciplined this action is will depend, further, on whether the Serbs in charge are regular army, Cetniks, or part of one of the marauding bands of militia.

At the same time, the three methods are interrelated. For example, the seemingly gratuitous brutality exercised in some towns against unresisting populations serves to heighten the overall degree of terror and increase compliance elsewhere. Interestingly, a number of Bosnians speculated that the exceptionally high degree of violence was intended not so much as a message to them, but as a warning to their Serb neighbors not to get on the "wrong side" and oppose the policy of ethnic cleansing.

The most common scenarios of ethnic cleansing are as follows:

1. A predominantly Muslim town comes under attack. The population flees or takes cover in the surrounding forests. Ultimately, the town falls to the Serbs, who either drive any remaining Muslims out immediately, often after killing or kidnapping a number of them, or terrorize them into leaving.

In Kliuc, villagers initially were reluctant to "voluntarily" sign their houses over to Serbia as ordered. Soldiers drove the inhabitants into their houses, except for the children, who were lined up on the main street. They were told to raise their arms and close their eyes, as though for execution, and the soldiers aimed their rifles at them. Instead of firing, the soldiers then ordered the children to go home and bring the papers, warning them that if they failed to do so, next time they would be killed.

In Zvornik, a group of Muslims was driven together onto the street, then the men were separated from the women and loaded onto trucks. When the trucks were full, the remaining men were taken behind a garage and shot.

Reports of such events quickly reached other Muslims. In Bosanski Petrovac, as a woman reports, orders to leave were not resisted. On the contrary, "we all rushed to the police station to sign our houses over. We just wanted to get out as fast as possible. No, we weren't promised anything in exchange for our signatures. Just death, that was our only alternative."



But even this compliance was no guarantee of safety. After everyone had signed, the inhabitants of this town were given a few hours to pack some personal possessions and were then boarded onto 20 trucks and buses. Just as the convoy seemed about to leave, soldiers abruptly opened fire on one of the buses. Only then did the convoy depart; 19 buses full of horrified townspeople, one bus full of dead and dying.

2. In towns with a mixed population, ethnic cleansing uses a more gradual, quasi-administrative approach. Some, generally those with someplace else to go, sense the approaching danger and begin to leave at this point. For them, obtaining the requisite papers is often accompanied by a great deal of bureaucratic harassment. In many instances, they have to sign their property over to Serbia. Numerous fees have to be paid. They have to present many forms attesting that the mortgage is paid up, that they own no weapons, etc. They have to pay in DM for the documents and for the so-called "Schlepper" who will transport them to safety.

In the end, after a period of discrimination and disenfranchisement, the eviction of the Muslims is ordered by the Serb administration. In those cases, transportation is usually organized by the Serbs, though it still often has to be paid for by the Muslims. The Muslim population of the town is loaded onto trucks, buses, or railway cars, and is taken to Bosnian-controlled territory, to Croatia, to Serb internment camps, or is simply deposited somewhere and ordered to continue fleeing on foot. At the time of departure the refugees are almost always uncertain which of these fates awaits them, and many believe that they are going to be killed.

The extended duration of the process by which Muslims are removed from their hometowns is a striking feature of this second variant of ethnic cleansing. At first, it appears that Muslims are merely being turned into second class citizens, subject to many new limitations and regulations. They lose their jobs. They are subject to a curfew. Serb neighbors no longer greet them. They need written permission to be on the street. Their children are mistreated in school, until most parents choose to keep them at home. When they are sick, hospitals may refuse treatment. They are forbidden to assemble in groups of more than three. This special treatment escalates until it becomes genuinely menacing. Now, the soldiers don't only search their homes, ostensibly for weapons, they also steal the money and jewelry. An ordinance may be issued forbidding Muslims to lock their doors at night. A military setback in the vicinity may result in the vindictive killing of some random Muslim civilians. Ultimately, those Muslims who have not left already are directly compelled to leave.

Such stories raise a number of questions. One puzzling feature is the mixture of complete lawlessness on the one hand, combined with pseudo-bureaucratic measures on the other. Why do the Serbs, when they are in fact driving the Muslims out by direct physical compulsion, place so much value on a quasi-legal appearance? Why do they bother to obtain signatures from their victims, when an hour later they are prepared to murder them in cold blood by shooting right into one of their buses? Why is the process so protracted in many places? Were the Muslims initially only supposed to be dominated and disenfranchised, or was their expulsion planned from the very beginning? Does the vacillation reflect uncertainty and perhaps internal disagreement within Serb circles? Was it a sophisticated psychological plan to minimize resistance? We can only speculate. Depending on the outcome, we may at some later point have access to more information about the way ethnic cleansing was decided upon. Was there disagreement within the leadership, causing conflicting orders? Was there any fear of possible consequences, so that one hesitated just a little at each escalating step to see if someone in the outside world was going to punitively intervene?

The two following reports seem to offer direct evidence for a high degree of uncertainty.

The first report comes from Esef, 45 years old, a former policeman from Sanskimost, about 80 km from Banja Luka:

"On the 26th of May 1992 the Serb police came to our town and instructed us to surrender. We were told to hang white sheets from the buildings and to turn in our weapons, and we did that. Then they assembled all of us on the Polygon, the paved lot where the driving schools give their lessons. They said we would have to sign an oath of loyalty to Serbia, and then we would be released. But instead, after a few hours, they marched us all to a village called Kurkojevski, where they kept us on the playground. At that point, a strange calm came over us. We thought they were planning to wait until nightfall and then shoot us all. But in the evening some trucks came, and they took us back home to Sanskimost and put us in the gymnasium. At this point they took the women and the children away, and only the men were left. Then the head of the local Serb Democratic Party came to the gymnasium and gave a speech, in which he called on us to sign the loyalty oath to Serbia. But ultimately we were never given the opportunity to sign such an oath. Instead, they began removing small groups of us, 30 men at a time. Every few days they would enter the hall and call out a list of names. We tried to discover some kind of pattern, but there was none. The people they called seemed to have nothing in common with each other. They weren't all rich, they weren't all teachers or educated people, they weren't members of the Muslim party, nothing like that. After a few weeks they told us we were going to

Jajce, where there would be a prisoner exchange. But that didn't happen. Instead, they took us to Mrkonicgrad. But the inhabitants of that town, who are mostly Bosnian Serbs, didn't want us. They refused to take us, so after two days they put us back on trucks and took us to the prison camp Manjaca."

Tefik, a young plumber from Upper Sepak, tells the story of an even more bizarre exodus:

"On the 5th of July the Cetniks came and ordered us to surrender our weapons. So we did, but not much was collected, we didn't have many guns, perhaps 15 altogether in a population of 2000, including hunting rifles. Then they told us that we had until midnight to leave town. We sent telegrams to everyone we could think of, asking for their help: to the Commander of the Yugoslav Army in Tuzla, to the Imam, to the Bishop of Bosnia and so on. And some of them actually intervened on our behalf, because the order was rescinded. But only temporarily. A few days later they came back, and this time we didn't know what else we could do, so we decided to go to Tuzla. We all went together, some by car or tractor, some on foot. Our first stop was Kozluk, but the second leg of the journey couldn't be completed, because we came upon tanks and barricades and we couldn't get through. So we all went back to Kozluk. It was very strange because, even while we were on the move, village life somehow went on. Five old people died during this time and several babies were born. When we got back to Kozluk we found a message from General Jankovic, the Yugoslav army commander, saying that we could go home again. So we went back to Upper Sepak, and we stayed there for about a month, but the situation was not good. Our town came under increasing siege, we were under bombardment, and we were harassed. Cetniks held positions all around and they would call out to us, 'Turks come out so we can kill you!' Finally, we hired Schleppers and we left."

This case shows, among other things, that even relatively small interventions from politically minor players had a brief effect. This is also known from Hitler Germany, where initial plans concentrated on the disenfranchisement and then the expulsion of the Jews. Reaching the "final solution" was an interactive process between Germany and the rest of the world, which tacitly gave permission at each crucial point of escalation. The above cases also show a lack of consensus among key players: it appears that the former Yugoslav army, the Serb Democratic Party, the Serb police, and the Cetniks were not acting in unanimity. Pressure from the outside could have increased any such fracture lines.

## Dissent Among Serbs

Many reports, both from within Serbia and concerning Serbs in Bosnia, point to a potential for dissent, which could have been fostered as another way of impeding the progress of Serb radicals. Even under present circumstances, where the media are totally controlled by those in power, and Serb public opinion is exposed to massive propaganda and misinformation, there is opposition. One of the surprising things to emerge from the interviews were reports of something resembling a nascent Serb underground.

Admir is a carpenter who was imprisoned in the Manjaca camp. He reports:

"The soldiers often abused us and beat us, but the one we feared the most was called Grigor. He would ask, are you a Muslim or a Serb, but then he would beat you without waiting for an answer. He liked to hit us with the back of his pistol, in the face or on the mouth. We were detailed to help farmers with the harvest, and these farmers saw our faces and asked us what had happened, so we told them. Then all of them went together to see the camp commander, and they told him, Grigor must go. A while later, Grigor actually was transferred away, and we heard he had been sent to the front."

In Sead's camp, four prisoners were beaten to death in front of the assembled prisoners for making statements against Serbia. One of them, according to Sead, had loudly compared the camp to a Nazi concentration camp. Sead was obviously very distraught about this and he confided in the Serb baker he was working for. This baker managed to obtain the release of Sead and the four other prisoners working for him by paying the camp commander 3,000 DM. Then he and his wife drove the four men to Croatia.

While these are acts of individual dissent, the final incident is most closely reminiscent of an actual underground. Adnan, in the work camp Doboje, was detailed to work for a trucking company. One evening the trucker told him to get in the luggage compartment, because he was going to help him escape. He drove him to a certain point where he met a second trucker, who took him over and drove him the rest of the way to the Croatian border. "They commented that they had done this several times before," Adnan adds.

Such reports indicate an absence of consensus among Serbs. We in fact do not know how much support Serb expansionism has at a popular level, and we have neglected to take even simple measures to encourage dissent or even to help people make decisions based on accurate information. For example, Malcolm Forbes tried to develop a VOA program for Serbia, which would have cost two million dollars, but his plan was rejected.

## Ethnicity

A current theory holds that we have underestimated the power of ethnicity, and former Yugoslavia at first glance certainly seems to support this idea. However, it may also show something very different; it may show that the revival of ethnicity is, at least in part, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In their interviews, Bosnian refugees were nearly universal in asserting three points. First, they alleged to be totally at a loss to explain how the hostility of the Serbs was possible. All of them, without exception, say that they lived and worked with and were close friends with Serbs. They claimed never to have felt any discrimination, exclusion, or tension, and were articulate in their shock and sense of betrayal. Many found excuses for their Serb neighbors, saying they must have been intimidated into cooperating with Serb expansionism, or confused by extremist political rhetoric. While there may be complex psychological reasons for such a denial, their assertions are backed by objective indicators. Intermarriage between Serbs and Muslims, for instance, was high and was generally not an occasion for family disapproval.

Secondly, most Bosnians described themselves as European and largely secular. Their religious identity was defined as a private matter, often restricted to the more cultural component such as the celebration of certain major holidays.

Thirdly, the refugees initially were certain of receiving help from Europe. The most wrenching part of the interviews was not even the substance of their stories, but the confident assumption of the refugees that they were telling us something new, something we did not already know—because if such events were known, help would surely have arrived long since.

Rather than showing, as Moynihan would argue, how strong ethnic ties are, one could argue that Bosnia shows how weak and how fluid political identity really is. William Pfaff makes the point that internationally, NO affiliation has held in regard to the Bosnians as they were universally abandoned to their fate.

“Geographic proximity, shared political values, evident implication in the consequences, religious or historical attachment, all have been ignored.” In the case of the Bosnians, ethnicity may be seen as the failure of larger affiliations: abandoned by the groups they thought they belonged to, the Bosnians may be obliged to fall back on the identity that is thrust upon them and that is cited, by their enemies, as the reason for their persecution.

This process, too, is interactive. It is interesting that in the initial months of the crisis, most German-language newspapers did not refer to the Bosnians as “Muslims,” only as Bosnians. During the first months of their stay in Austria,

many refugee children were hard-pressed to tell you what their religious affiliation was. A few months later, they—including those whose parents were professionals and self-declared secularists—were receiving daily religious instruction from a Hoja in a corner of the camp. The Islamization of the Bosnians, including the potential attraction of radical Islamic ideas for some of them, can be interpreted as a result of their abandonment by Europe.

Many analysts believe that the consequences of Bosnia will be with us for a long time to come. The case of Bosnia has revealed a high degree of political indecisiveness, a lack of European cohesion, a lack of credibility on the part of large international organizations such as the UN, the Red Cross, and others, and future aggressors as well as those who feel vulnerable to aggression will be quick to draw lessons from this, some of which do not bode well for disarmament or the future stability of Europe.

Since this is the topic of the next speaker, in transition I would only like to quote Henry Feingold from the book, *Human Responses to the Holocaust*:

"The Jews innocently and optimistically assumed that there was a spirit of civilization in the world, located perhaps in the Oval Office or in the Vatican, which could be mobilized to prevent their annihilation. How they came to such a conclusion is an enigma. Certainly it was based more on hope than on the reality of Jewish experience in the 20th century. But they believed it, and one can hear it even today in the despair of survivors like Elie Wiesel who want to know why the world did not care, why nothing was done, not by Roosevelt, not by Churchill, not by the Pope, not by Stalin, not by anybody."

We are left with a truth almost too difficult to accept because it flies in the face of everything we want to believe, at least about our time in history. It is more dangerous than ever to be powerless in the secular world because the modern nation-state is not capable of making human responses. Those who assume otherwise pay a very high price.

## 5. Bosnia As Future<sup>5</sup> by Albert Wohlstetter

The United States, as the leader of a coalition of democracies, should announce that *no territorial gains or changes within (the former) Yugoslavia brought about by violence are acceptable*--whether by Serbia or by Croatia. Starting with Resolution 713 of September 25, 1991, asked for by the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav government as a way of keeping the republics that wanted more autonomy disarmed, the UN Security Council has repeatedly said that no such gains are acceptable. The italicized words are taken from that September 25th Security Council resolution.

Even if the Council had not said it, the United States should. Failure to say and mean it encourages the Serbs--and now the Croats--to violate promise after promise to cease firing. While pretending to negotiate, they continue to "change the facts on the ground."

Neither the absurdities, nor the alarmed recognition that they are absurd, are partisan matters. The fact that we've disarmed the victims of aggression rather than the aggressors has disturbed both the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate, and political leaders of normally opposed predisposition throughout the West. The grim ironies flow from the fact that the West has persisted in a basic policy, adopted in September 1991 at Serbian request, that supports Serbian suppression of the independence of republics even though we have long since recognized their independence.

The September 1991 Security Council resolution that the Serbs asked for itself expressed alarm at the fact that the Serbs had violated two successive cease-fires they had signed during the preceding week. If now, instead of pressing the Serbs to stop and withdraw, we press the Bosnians to yield all or most of the territory the Serbs have seized steadily by violence over the last 15 months in which we have continued to keep the Bosnians essentially unarmed, the Serbs can count on completing the final solution for Bosnia with no more than an expression of alarm by the democracies. And we can expect them to continue their program of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, Croatia, Vojvodina, and Macedonia--with consequences for Albania, Hungary, and the neighboring NATO states of Italy,

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<sup>5</sup>©Albert Wohlstetter, 1993.

Turkey, and Greece. And with consequences beyond the Balkans, by encouraging those members of the Russian military who have never been reconciled to the breakup of the Soviet Union to use the pretext of protecting Russian minorities in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and the Baltics to recover territory and strategic assets there.

In August 1990, when Iraq swiftly seized all of Kuwait, many prominent political figures said, "Kuwait is history." They called only for economic sanctions against further expansion. The President, however, led the UN in saying that the seizure of Kuwait would not stand. If he hadn't said that, Saudi Arabia might be history. If we say now that "Bosnia is history," meaning that we accept the violent changes in borders and that we condone the forcing of Bosnian Muslims into an ethnically pure ghetto in Bosnia, we increase the likelihood of further ethnic cleansing--of Serbs in Croatia, of Croats in Serbia, of Albanians in Kosova and Macedonia, Hungarians in Vojvodina, and so on. But if we say that the violent changes in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia will not stand, we improve the prospects for the evolution of less violent and more tolerant multi-ethnic states in the Balkans, in the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere.

In this double sense, Bosnia is the future.

Second, the U.S. should say it *rejects any partition of Bosnia into three territorially distinct states based on ethnic or confessional principles*. That uses the exact November 1992 words--very good, unequivocal, and prophetic words today--of the two co-chairmen and principal mediators, one representing the European Community and the other the United Nations, at the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia (ICFY). They went on to say that there is *no viable way to create* such a partition.

Such a plan could achieve homogeneity and coherent boundaries only by . . . forced expulsions of the population. . . . The International Conference . . . condemns [these] totally . . . and calls for the reversal of those which [have] already taken place. . . . A confederation formed of three such States would be inherently unstable, for at least two would surely forge immediate and stronger connections with neighboring states of the former Yugoslavia.

By February 1992, however, one of the co-chairmen was saying that while he hadn't ceased for one moment his "indignation and anger about ethnic cleansing," you have to "seek a negotiated settlement and leave the moral judgments to others." The Serbs had by then conquered a third of Croatia and 70 percent of Bosnia. They had, according to news accounts, "gone a long ways



towards fulfilling Milosevic's dream of an ethnically pure Greater Serbia uniting all Serbs in the Balkans." And Elie Wiesel, who knows about ethnic purification, reported that the President of Serbia and Radovan Karadzic, Serbia's Bosnian leader, had betrayed their promise to him and to representatives of the World Jewish Congress to close camps crowded with prisoners "lying on bare ground, pressed against one another, like human shadows."

But the co-chairmen, who had the best of intentions, felt there was trust between them and Milosevic, "on the level of man for man." Vaclav Havel has observed that dissidents subject to the oppression of Marxist dictators have a certain reticence about the neutrality of well-intended Western advocates of peace between the democracies and communist dictatorships. These neutral peacemakers can return home to the safety of a democracy--the dissident victims of repression cannot.

One co-chairman said: "Milosevic is now prepared to take on the hard right, he is prepared to deal with [Bosnia], and he is heading towards leading Serbia back into the European family. I have no doubt of that." But it seems that it was the other way around. Milosevic had been leading the mediators and the European family a long way back towards support of ethnic cleansing.

In July 1993, the UN and EC co-chairmen of the International Conference were pressing the Bosnian government to accept precisely the partition of Bosnia proposed by Milosevic and Tudjman which they had totally rejected last November. But the reasons the co-chairmen offered in November apply with even greater force today: partition will mean an enormous slaughter and the forced expulsion of millions, at a time when Europe is closing its borders to refugees and there is realistically no place for them to go. The State Department's annual report to the Congress on human rights stressed that, "the atrocities of the Croats and Bosnian Muslims pale in comparison to the sheer scale and calculated cruelty of the killings and other abuses committed by Serbian and Bosnian Serbian forces against Bosnian Muslims. The policy of driving out innocent civilians of a different ethnic or religious group from their homes, so-called ethnic cleansing, was practiced by Serbian forces in Bosnia on a scale that dwarfs anything seen in Europe since Nazi times." Many sober international organizations concerned with refugee problems and human disasters have said as much, including, for example, *Medicins sans Frontieres*.

Milovan Djilas, wartime deputy of Tito who was a key person in fixing the internal borders of Tito's Yugoslavia in 1945, and Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian foreign minister, have both observed that the Serbian leaders are Marxist totalitarians who understand only superior force. (But Kozyrev unfortunately

has opposed Western use of military force against the Serbs and opposed lifting the embargo that keeps the Serbs vastly superior in military force to the Bosnians.)

Nonetheless, Djilas and Kozyrev are both right about Marxist dictators.

There is an important role for peacekeeping. But you can't keep a peace broken by a dictator who recognizes only superior force and who is bent on creating a Greater Serbia cleansed of non-Serbs, unless you are able and willing to use the appropriate force yourself; or to arm the victims of ethnic cleansing; or to undertake some mixture of both in which an initial use of coalition force can put the victims of cleansing in a position to defend themselves rather than to be endlessly dependent on the coalition to defend it. If you can't or won't do these things, talking to the dictator, getting an agreement with him, extracting promises from him, and warning him will not accomplish your end. A genuine peace has to be made before it can be kept.

The President today is weighing the use of U.S. air power to "break the siege of Sarajevo and protect relief deliveries to other cities of Bosnia-Herzegovina." He is considering a wider use of air power to protect Bosnian civilians from slaughter. But the President, as of July 28th, had said only that he would use U.S. air power to protect the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia--and only "if we are asked to provide that assistance by the [UN]Secretary General."

That will not stop ethnic cleansing. Force has to be directed at the relevant desirable political ends. And one has to use the appropriate military means.

In Iraq, President Bush stated quite clearly, as Desert Storm got underway, that we had aims beyond getting Iraq out of Kuwait. Many of these aims were also embodied in the UN resolutions. To achieve these would have involved destroying the Iraqi dictatorship's heavy armor and artillery that kept the vast majority of Iraqis in subjection. It required destroying them not only in the Kuwaiti theater of operations but, as we easily could have, throughout Iraq. But faulty intelligence underestimated the widespread Iraqi opposition to the Baath dictatorship of Baghdad, not only to Saddam. We tried to preserve the dictatorship. We let the Republican Guards slaughter the Shia Arabs in Basrah and the Kurds in the north when they rebelled.

As a result, we find we are not really out of Iraq to this day, that the dictatorship continues to slaughter in the south and to prepare another slaughter in the north. And it continues to harass the IAEA and UN inspectors trying to ensure compliance with the resolutions calling for the end to Iraq's programs for rebuilding the conventional capabilities that menace its neighbors and its

programs for producing weapons of mass terror which extend its threats far beyond Iraq's neighborhood.

One of the failures of the conventional realism that rests on the assumption that internal terror is no concern of ours, is the failure to recognize that internal and external terror have an intrinsic connection: Very few Iraqis are likely to undertake the suicidal risks of revealing the existence of these programs.

Against the Serbian dictatorship, the coalition should use air power extensively not only in Bosnia but, as we did in the Gulf War, against the war supporting industry, stocks of materiel, communications, and transport needed by the aggressor to sustain his invasion. We will need to use some ground forces, for example in such roles as forward air control and laser designation to improve the precise use of air power in Bosnia. Precise and discriminate air power can help disarm the Serbian military forces that are slaughtering civilians and can reduce any unintended harm by the coalition. And they can help assure the safe delivery of arms to the Bosnians, so they can defend themselves.

The coalition, then, should use force not only to protect the UN Protection Force, but explicitly to reduce military power by the Serbian dictatorship and to protect the "safe havens" UNPROFOR is supposed to be protecting. To limit our protection to the Protection Force would be a residue of the earlier Mitterrand and Major position that any U.S. strikes to protect Bosnian civilians would endanger UNPROFOR. Now that UNPROFOR has been deliberately subjected to Serbian artillery attack and injured directly--not just as a byproduct of Serbian attacks on Bosnian civilian centers--we should end the charade. Destroying the artillery that is the source of attack on UNPROFOR would automatically have, if only an unintended byproduct, the protection of Bosnian civilians. And protecting Bosnian civilians--the ostensible purpose of UNPROFOR--would also protect UNPROFOR as well as its purpose. And the coalition should give Bosnia the arms it seeks to defend itself. If, as is now acknowledged, a coalition can destroy the artillery and the tanks and personnel carriers that the Serbs, and now Croats, are now using to harass UNPROFOR, as well as to block delivery of humanitarian aid to the Bosnians, the coalition can also deliver arms to the Bosnians so they can take part in their own self-defense.

NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner has responded to John Major's argument that lifting the embargo on arms to the Bosnians would increase the violence and extend the fighting by pointing out that the U.S. supply of arms to Britain during World War II had extended the fighting for years--and enabled the British to win. They might have lost to Hitler rather quickly. And Mr. Mitterrand, who makes the same argument, might consider that Britain, supplied

by the United States and eventually joined by it, continued to fight even after the fall of France. That not only gave some hope for the French resistance but also made it possible for de Gaulle to organize the Free French and, together with the Allies, liberate France. If we had not prolonged the fighting, the Petain government and its successors might have accommodated what was left of France to a Europe unified by Hitler.

But in fact the democracies have kept Bosnia essentially defenseless for so long that they cannot immediately save much of what's left. The arms embargo has lengthened the war between Croatia and Bosnia since Milosevic began to invade in June 1991. His undisciplined, poorly motivated, and cowardly forces in Bosnia have refused to take on the Croatian and Bosnian lightly armed militias directly. They stayed at a safe distance and lobbed mortar and howitzers into Croatian and Bosnian cities against innocent civilians. Using force now to arm Bosnia and to increase its chances for defending itself and eventually to liberate what it has lost of its multi-ethnic society, has an essential connection with the possibility of using force to stop the next moves towards a Greater Serbia. It is very relevant also as a convincing demonstration that the democracies have the will to use force if necessary to stop pan-nationalists elsewhere in former Communist dictatorships from using the excuse of protecting minorities to recapture lost territories and strategic facilities.

If we had near the outset allowed more fighting, in the sense of arming the Bosnians so they could fight too, the Serbs might have withdrawn as they did from Slovenia, in humiliation. In any case, the one-sided slaughter the EC supported has not been exactly brief. In Bosnia it has gone on for 16 months as each hopeful cease-fire has broken down. (The Serbian invasion started two years ago when the Serbs invaded Slovenia without even the plausible pretext of protecting a substantial Serbian minority. The Serbs are about one percent of Slovenia. The Slovenians were prepared to fight. The Serb-dominated Federal Army, without the further bolstering by assurance that the West would not intervene, were much less so.)

If it will not start with the besieged Sarajevo, the coalition might begin the arming of Bosnia at, for example, the large Bosnian airfield at Tuzla, which is under the control of the Bosnian government. We and several of the NATO allies have aircraft equipped with their own laser-designating ability, which enables them to destroy tanks and armored personnel carriers very precisely. They also have other aircraft which are capable of disabling armor if the armor is designated by forward air controllers on the ground equipped with hand-held laser designators. All the allies, including the Turks and Italians, have exercised forward air controllers in communicating in English—aside from courage, the

most important skill for a forward air controller is communicating in English with aircraft. There may be highly motivated Bosnians with proficiency in English to go through the rather short period of training required for laser designation. One could extend the perimeter of Bosnian-controlled Tuzla so that once again it will be safe against shoulder-fired weapons, and air transport will be able to deliver humanitarian and military equipment. One can do the same for roads connecting Tuzla with Sarajevo, and for Sarajevo itself.

Such ground forces are minimal in number and likely to be very effective, especially as the discipline and the morale of the Serbs is much lower than that of the Iraqi soldiers during the Gulf War who deserted, surrendered, and defected in far larger numbers than our intelligence agencies had estimated. Two hundred thousand young Serbs have fled Serbia to avoid being forcibly recruited into the Army. The large numbers that were forcibly recruited would not need much force to encourage them to leave. Milosevic and Karadzic themselves have pulled back every time it appeared that President Clinton was serious about using force. This is a strong indication of how they will respond when we actually do use some force directed at Serbian military power inside Serbia, as well as at bridges and stocks of supplies in Bosnia.

The President's plan for Bosnia near the beginning of May, according to news accounts, contemplated deploying about 4,000 Army troops, increasing them to about 18,000 in three weeks as part of a NATO contingent totaling about 65,000. Rather less than that number of American ground forces might be needed in the form of Marine expeditionary battalions to secure a Dalmatian port like Split in order to deliver humanitarian aid and arms in much larger quantities in a collective defense of Bosnia. And the Navy has aircraft with laser self-designation to provide air cover, as well as other aircraft that can provide cover using the forward air controllers. But the Croats might actually help the coalition.

The Croats would have strong motives to abandon their own attempts to grab the small amount of Bosnia not already seized by the Serbs. The Croats, whose Dalmatian coast is extremely vulnerable to the Serbs, have every reason to fear the renewal of a Serbian-Croat war once the buffer of Bosnia is removed. When the coalition demonstrates its seriousness about rolling back the Serbs, the Croats will have every reason to reform its initial alliance with the Bosnian government. We may need very few Marines.

The United States--and the international community--have recognized Bosnia as an independent state. A coalition use of military force in Bosnia responding to a Bosnian request would be an exercise of the right of collective self-defense. That

right was not conferred by the UN. Nor can it be revoked by a few members of the UN Security Council. It is acknowledged as "inherent" in Article 51 of the UN Charter. The U.S. cited it in intervening in Korea, in the Gulf War, and again recently in Iraq, and, if I recall correctly, in Somalia. (It doesn't make sense to say that it is in the U.S. national interest to exercise that right in Somalia, but not in the Balkans.) Denying the U.S. and Bosnia's right of collective self-defense ignores not only Article 51 of the Charter, but it violates the Genocide Convention adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, which obligates members of the UN not to aid genocide, but to take all measures within their power to prevent it. (*Pace* the recent contrary statements of the UN Secretary General.) The coalition should, of course, keep the UN Secretary General informed, but it should not condition action on getting his agreement, or that of a majority of the UN Security Council, nor its Permanent Members.

Third, the U.S. and the coalition it leads should prepare to use military force appropriately to induce Serbia to give up the fruits of violence we have said we will never accept. That means using force not only locally near the currently besieged "safe havens," but greatly to reduce Serbia's future power of aggression. It does *not* require locating and destroying Serbian national leadership—an enterprise air power has been notably unsuccessful in accomplishing in Somalia, in Iraq, and in many other places. And it surely does not mean punishing Serbs in general, including the many Serbian civilians who oppose the dictatorship. A threat to end Serbia as a country, modeled on a recent threat uttered by President Clinton to end Iraq as a country, will not impress the dictator, who will know it is not serious. But an actual use of our stealthy bombers against his military power will. As of August 1st, the President has said that the United States will use air power to save Sarajevo, even if our allies don't join us. That is an important advance, but it doesn't go far enough. It still ignores the obvious fact, known to our newsmen on the spot as well as our intelligence agencies, that Serbia is the continuing source of the aggression.

The F-117A stealthy fighter-bomber is capable of destroying all the fixed-wing and other aircraft on the large airfield at Banja Luka in Bosnia, where the Serbs have placed them in violation of their promise. It can, and should, do the same on the airfields in Serbia itself. It can attack the fixed radars that guide the few high-altitude SAMs. And it can attack stocks of munitions and fuel and other targets that would help isolate the Bosnian Serbs. Moreover, it could do this with minimal risks to the aircraft and crews. (No F-117As were lost on their many extended, effective missions against the much more formidable Iraqi integrated air defense network during the Gulf War.) And it could accomplish this important goal with little risk of unintended harm to civilians. Fixed-wing jet

aircraft require long runways and airfields of great area. Families do not live near the fixed-wing aircraft we would destroy. No children play soccer there.

Such a large reduction in Milosevic's power of aggression, accompanied by an effective, precise destruction of Serbian artillery and armor in Bosnia, would have a much larger effect on Milosevic and on the morale of the poorly disciplined Serbian military and paramilitary forces in Bosnia than any military action designed simply to respond to specific local provocations. And it would give the many Serbs who oppose the dictatorship an opportunity to help end it.

The belated military actions that have been mainly under discussion in the press seem designed only, as the President has said, to bring the parties to the negotiating table in Geneva. There they could only conclude an agreement which would legitimate all or most of the gains that the Serbs and Croats have made in Bosnia by violence—gains that we have said we would never accept. And they would leave the Bosnians unarmed in a remnant of territory soon likely to disappear.

If the West wants to avoid a future of ethnic cleansing, it should adopt a political and military policy aimed at putting the victims of ethnic cleansing in a position to defend themselves so they don't have to depend on the international community to protect them in perpetuity.





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